**ANNUAL CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

**TAMESIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

**1 Introduction**

1.1 All admission authorities are required to consult on changes to admission arrangements. Where no changes are proposed to the coordinated admissions scheme or admission arrangements, there is no requirement to consult. Admission authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014. The consultation process follows a timetable determined by the Department for Education (DfE).

1.2 For entry to school in September 2019 Tameside Council is proposing to make a number of changes to the admission arrangements for community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools and these are outlined below.

1.3 The proposed changes will only affect community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools and will not affect any academies, voluntary aided or free schools who are responsible for their own admission arrangements.

1.4 The admission arrangements and published admission numbers for all voluntary controlled and community schools for 2019 /2020 are proposed to be the same as those that applied for admission in 2018/19 without change other than the proposals set out below.

**2 Proposed change to criterion 4 of the oversubscription criteria**

2.1 In September 2009, Tameside Council amended its oversubscription criteria following correspondence with the Local Government Ombudsman about the perceived unfairness of the then criterion 4. The original criterion read:

*4. Children attending primary schools in Tameside including independent schools and pupils educated at home at the time of application, as identified by Tameside MBC. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.*

2.2 The Local Government Ombudsman observed that criterion 4 may have had the perverse effect of making it almost impossible for children who have recently moved to Tameside from another borough to get a place at a Tameside Secondary School. In light of this, criterion 4 was amended to say

*4. Children attending primary schools in Tameside including independent schools and pupils educated at home at the time of application, as identified by Tameside MBC.*

*When a parent has moved from further than ½ mile to an address within ½ mile of a Tameside Primary school whilst their child is in Year 5 or 6 and they have chosen to keep their child at their current primary school, or where the child is educated at home and the address is within half a mile of a Tameside primary school, this will be considered as an exceptional circumstance under criterion 4, provided details are given on the special circumstances form together with satisfactory evidence of the house move.*

2.3 Over the past eight years, there have been few applications when parents have requested to have their application considered under the new criteria. The following table shows numbers for the last two years.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Applications received | Applications approved |
| 2016 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | 3 | 3 |

2.4 As can be seen, there have been very few applications considered under this criterion.

2.5 For September 2016, Tameside Council again altered Criterion 4 following a determination by the School Adjudicator. The criterion now reads:

*4. Children attending the named partner primary school at the time of application. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.*

*Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.*

*When a parent has moved from further than ½ mile to an address within ½ mile of a named partner school, whilst their child is in Year 5 or 6, and they have chosen to keep their child at their current primary school, this will be considered as an exceptional circumstance under criterion 4, provided details are given on the special circumstances form together with satisfactory evidence of the house move.*

2.6 The School Admissions Team have noticed an increase in the number of requests from parents asking for their application to be considered under the ½ a mile criterion and particularly the Team are increasingly being asked to measure the distance from houses that are for sale to the partner primary schools of our most popular secondary schools. Parents are often already resident in the borough but their children are not attending a partner primary school for their preferred school. For September 2018 applications, the Team have already received enquiries from four families asking if they bought particular house, would they qualify under Criterion 4. The Team believe that this criterion as it is currently worded is being used by parents to gain an advantage when applying for a secondary school place that was never intended with this criterion.

2.7 There has also been some confusion about the definition of “at the time of application”. The online admission system opens in late August until the national deadline of 31 October. With some schools, it has proved difficult to verify at what date a child started at partner primary schools and so the Council is consulting on having an objective measure of the date that eligibility will be established. The Council are therefore proposing to change the deadline to be “on the closing date for applications”.

2.7 Tameside Council are therefore consulting to remove the qualifying statement from the current criterion 4 so that it will read

 4. Children attending the named partner primary school on the closing date for applications. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

**3 Proposed changes to published admission numbers**

3.1 To confirm the reduction in the published admission number at Arlies Primary School in Stalybridge from 45 to 30

3.2 To increase the published admission number at Aldwyn Primary School in Audenshaw from 45 to 60

3.3 To increase the published admission number at Denton Community College in Denton from 270 to 330

**4 Changes to partner primary schools**

4.1 To include St John Fisher RC Primary School in Denton in the list of partner primary schools for Denton Community College

4.2 To include Flowery Field Primary School in Hyde in the list of partner primary schools for Alder Community High School.

**5 Responses to the consultation**

5.1 The consultation will run from Thursday 12 October 2017 to Thursday 23 November 2017

5.2 You should send your comments to: Jacqueline Nurney, Early Education Funding and School Organisation Manager, Directorate of Children’s Services, Tameside Council, Shirley House, Hyde, SK14 1LJ or jacqueline.nurney@tameside.gov.uk